RWRC^
DISCOVERY
50

Global retail tech start-ups
accelerating innovation

AT A GLANCE

Back in November, Retail Week announced a brand new launch – *Discovery 50*. A report to emphasise the value of collaboration between start-ups and retailers while supporting better connections across the sector.

We sought to find or 'discover' the top retail tech start-ups from across the globe that are working with retailers to offer disruptive solutions to transform their businesses.

It would be an understatement to say the retail landscape has changed drastically since November when we opened for entries. The Covid-19 pandemic is occupying all aspects of public life and continues to completely dominate the retail agenda and media headlines.

Many retailers are battling for survival and leaders are having to embrace digital ways of operating while simultaneously working doubly hard to protect staff and customers.

At this unprecedented time, we could have postponed the *Discovery 50* report launch. However, we believe it is exactly at a time like this that retailers need to open themselves up to new and different ways of thinking.

It's a time when the retail industry needs to be lifted, to celebrate, to showcase how the Davids and Goliaths can work together, and to inspire through the stories of retailers that have partnered with start-ups to maximise business performance.

We're very aware that for many retailers investing in a start-up partnership may be the last thing on the agenda, but that doesn't mean the industry shouldn't be taking a moment to reflect and look forward. The crisis will eventually pass and there is a bounty of incredible start-ups with solutions that can support the sector – both in the here and now, and in the future.

With analysis of the influential role start-ups can play, alongside the challenges they face in getting cut-through in the retail sector, *Discovery 50* highlights how start-ups can help retailers seize new opportunities and overcome existing challenges.

The report also serves as a directory of the best start-ups to work with. Corporate start-up engagement company Co:Cubed chief executive Jeremy Basset says: "There's no shortage of start-ups out there. But with new companies going to market every week, access to this innovation jungle without expertise can be chaos.

"If [retailers are] serious about getting this right, it's vital you're working with the best start-ups in the world – not just the ones that appear in your inbox."

It's worth noting that several start-ups among the Discovery 50 specialise in in-store solutions, many of which will be redundant for retailers right now as the government keeps the UK high street on lockdown.

These start-ups do, however, have the potential to help store-based retailers bounce back when the crisis lifts and when experience-based physical retail will arguably be more important than ever.

So, which tech start-ups can drive retail forward both in the short and long term, and what are the game-changing solutions retailers need to know about?

Read on to meet the Discovery 50 and learn how start-ups can help retail at a time when it's needed most.

METHODOLOGY

The tech start-ups featured in *Discovery 50* started trading on, or after, January 1, 2013 and have all worked with a retailer or retailers to help them transform their business. Start-ups submitted entries from November 2019 to February 2020 with the chance of being profiled and entries were then shortlisted by our judging panel. Information about each start-up was correct at the time of entry.

RWRC: DISCOVERY 50

RWRC DISCOVERY 50

MEET THE JUDGES

With backgrounds in retail, technology, the start-up industry and more, meet the business leaders and journalists who judged the Discovery 50

JOHN NOTHER

Chief digital officer at National Institute for Health Research; former senior director of digital technology at Asda; former chief information officer at Card Factory

LISA BYFIELD-GREEN

Head of insight at Retail Week

NATALIE BERG

Retail analyst, author and founder of retail consultancy NBK Retail

JEREMY BASSET

Chief executive of Co:Cubed; former head of Unilever Foundry

ANNA BARSBY

Founder of Tessiant; former chief technology officer at Morrisons

IAN SHEPHERD

Retail consultant; author of *Reinventing Retail*

MEGAN DUNSBY

Commercial content editor at Retail Week; former projects editor at Startups.co.uk
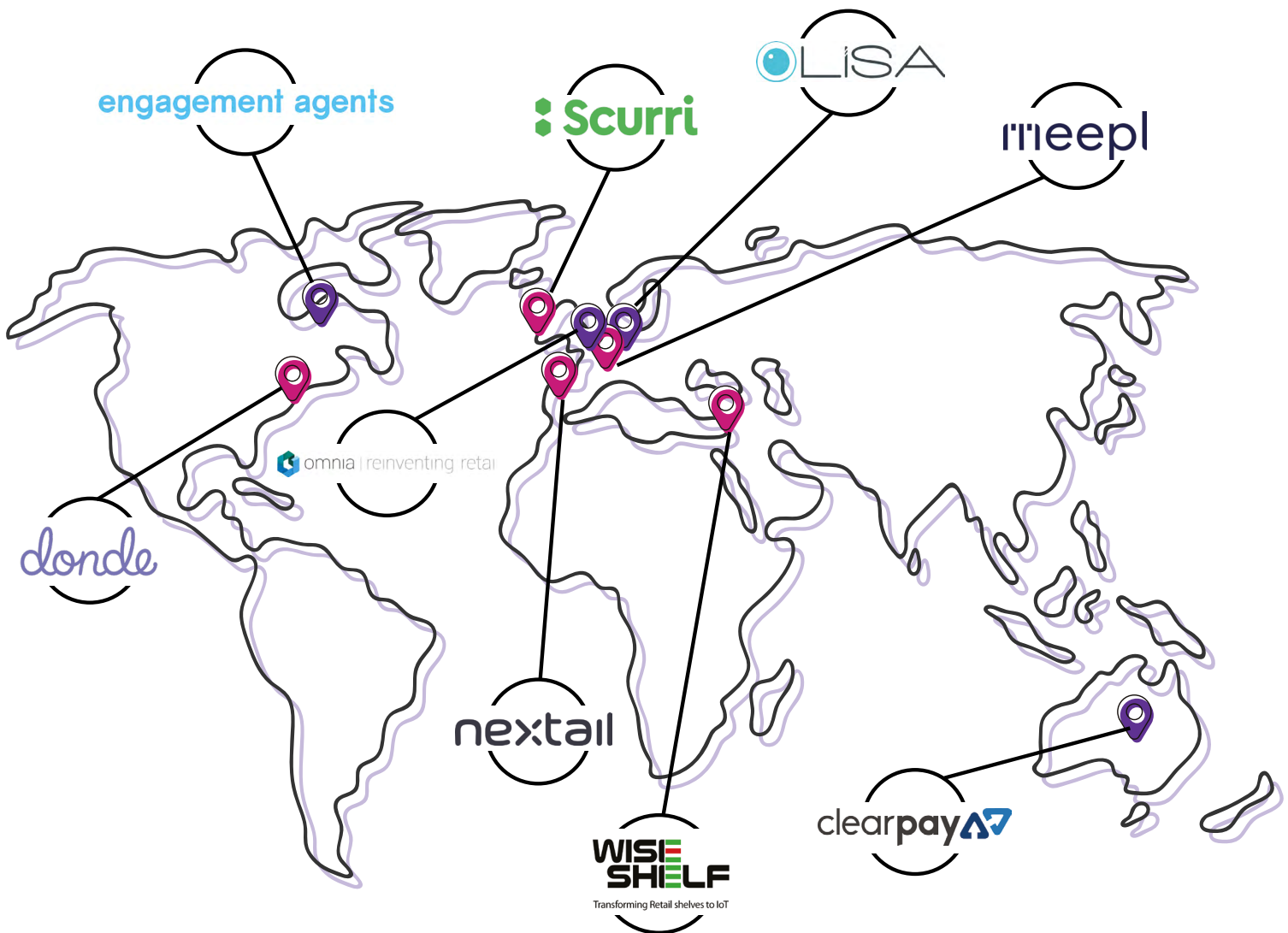
KAREN BENDELL

Co-founder of Retail Collective; former interim chief executive of New & Lingwood

LEANNE CARR

Former Retail Week reporter

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DISCOVERY 🚀 50
IN NUMBERS

50

tech start-ups

9

of which are global (see map)

2013

All launched since Jan 1, 2013

1,520

Employing a total of 1,520 staff

engagement agents

: Scurri

⊙LiSA

meepl

omnia | reinventing retail

donde

nextail

WISE SHELF
Transforming Retail shelves to IoT

clearpay⊿⊿

INTRODUCTION

From consumer electronics etailer AO.com and global luxury brand LVMH to legacy retailers such as Marks & Spencer and John Lewis Partnership, retailers of all shapes, sizes and sectors are embracing start-up culture, whether via direct partnerships or accelerator programmes.

Yet there is still a long way to go and many retailers haven't yet realised the potential of joining forces with start-ups.

In light of the changes the industry is experiencing in a coronavirus-impacted world, retailers require fresh thinking and innovative approaches.

As you'll see from the Discovery 50, there is a breadth of start-ups that can help retailers better leverage their online presence, support the development of brand tribes and communities, and take costs out of a business – all areas that are front of mind as the sector enters uncharted Covid-19-influenced waters.

While tech start-ups can help retailers in the short term to battle against the financial strain caused by the pandemic, there are longer-term growth opportunities too.

Crucially, fostering start-up partnerships enables retailers to better compete with the growing number of disruptors and direct-to-consumer brands entering the market. Where these brands are using innovation and tech infrastructure to grow fast and connect with consumers, retailers can match this by adopting game-changing solutions offered by start-ups.
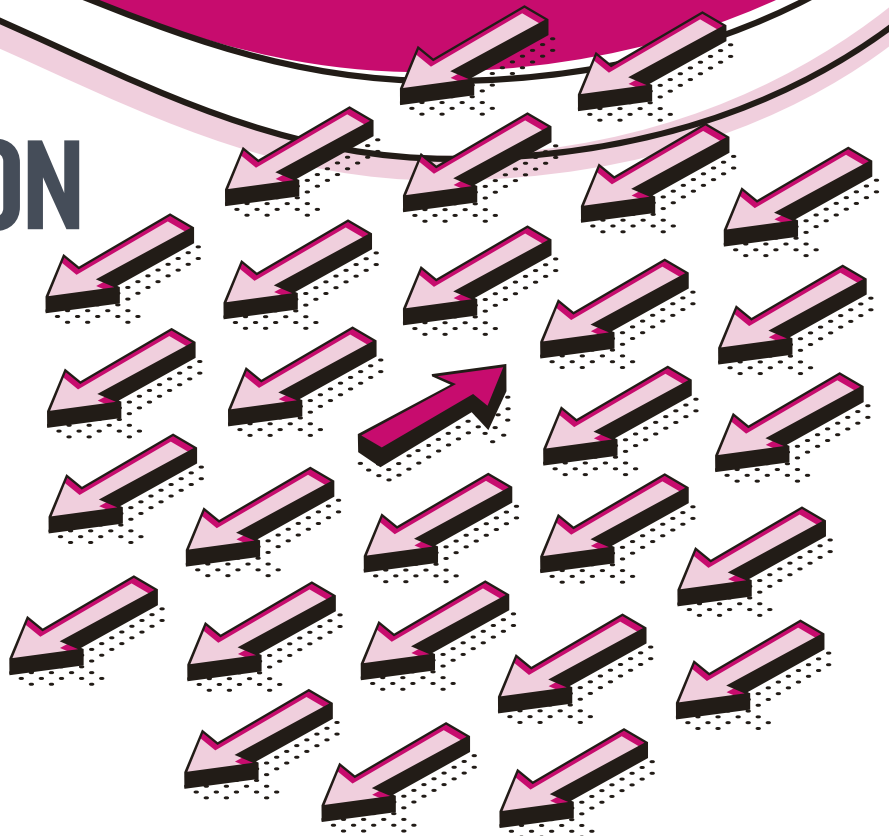
By working with start-ups retailers can getter a better view of where the next disruptions will come from.

So, which are the top tech start-ups from across the globe that can help retailers open doors to new and untapped business opportunities? And which start-ups will be there to help retailers with a bricks-and-mortar presence get back on their feet once the pandemic crisis is over?

Emphasising the value of collaboration between start-ups and retailers, and incorporating real-life case studies, this report showcases what happens when retail and new thinking meet.

"

It's vital you're working with the best start-ups in the world – not just the ones that appear in your inbox

Jeremy Basset, Co:Cubed

""

START-UPS CAN OFFER RETAILERS A LIFELINE

The economics of retailing in 2020 were already tough, buffeted by rising costs, changing consumer expectations and shopping behaviours, alongside the pressure of keeping up with the pace of technological change. Coronavirus has made the landscape even tougher and, for non-essential retailers who rely on store footfall, impossible.

The retail industry is quickly adapting. The focus has shifted to thinking digitally, embracing new channels, technologies and ways of driving efficiency and effectiveness through organisations and their workforces.

Fundamentally, retailers need to be there for consumers and maintain communication and a relationship with them throughout this crisis. But for big businesses, change doesn't always come fast enough.

On the face of it, the tech start-up community represents a potential lifeline for retailers.

Start-ups present new ways of connecting with customers, the next level of operational efficiency, clever use of AI and machine-learning technologies, and data to personalise messaging and brand awareness.

Speaking to Retail Week in 2019, Microsoft's retail, consumer goods, travel and transport director Diana Parker highlighted the "power of the tech partnership".

She said: "Where technology was historically used by retailers to 'keep the lights on', it is no longer a utility, but essential to the strategic transformation of retail offerings and operations in an increasingly challenging environment."

How start-ups can reinvent retail

For retailers focused on a turnaround programme – which now accounts for most businesses dealing with the impact of coronavirus – it makes sense to build strong relationships with start-ups.

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DISCOVERY 50

By doing so, retailers put themselves in a position to get first sight of solutions and new ideas, to pick and choose which innovators they work with and to focus on delivering a new version of a key business process that could help to future-proof amid turbulent economic conditions.

Deliveroo is a great example of a start-up supporting retailers in achieving the latter. As a 'unicorn' company with a valuation of more than $1bn, it is not listed in our Discovery 50, but its impressive series of recent retail tie-ups shows how the dial is moving.

For instance, in March 2020, Marks & Spencer teamed up with Deliveroo for its first delivery range, offering 120 of its food essentials to "help people get the food they want and need during this worrying [crisis] period".

However, while the likes of M&S may have adopted a start-up partnership mentality, this isn't true of the wider industry.

Retailers can often be hesitant to work with start-ups despite the challenges involved in staying fresh and innovative. A 2018 report from professional services company Accenture found only 6% of corporate businesses were generating a significant proportion of their income from new activities and investments. However, this same 6% reported the strongest financial performance of all 1,440 companies Accenture surveyed.

Clearly then, retailers have a way to go in overcoming obstacles. Indeed, retail consultant Ian Shepherd says the start-ups he talks to "report a wide range of objections, barriers and general layers of bureaucracy that make it harder for them to work with retailers and prevent those same retailers

> **Where technology was historically used by retailers to 'keep the lights on', it is no longer a utility, but essential to the strategic transformation of retail offerings and operations in an increasingly challenging environment**
>
> **Diana Parker, Microsoft**

Only 6% of corporate businesses are making new investments, but this 6% have achieved stronger financial performance
(Source: Accenture)

from getting much of the benefit that new ideas can bring".

He points to several scenarios experienced by start-ups that have sought to work with retailers (see below).

On top of these scenarios, Shepherd says, is the one that's most common; that the process of a large retailer partnering with a start-up can take a painfully long time.

He notes: "I worked with one global giant (ironically in the tech space), where the most honest advice we could give to start-ups that approached us was to go elsewhere.

"Our two- or three-year process of negotiating a memorandum of understanding and gearing up a trial would last far beyond the point where their funding and patience had run out."

However, this doesn't have to be the case. If retailers can streamline and fast-track their contractual processes there are major rewards to be reaped.

Many start-ups in the Discovery 50 have implemented pilot schemes within weeks of starting conversations with a retailer, while others have been able to integrate full-scale solutions in a matter of months that have delivered major return on investment.

COMMON BARRIERS IMPACTING RETAIL START-UP PARTNERSHIPS

- A retailer's **IT** team is concerned about the fragility of core systems, so it won't let another business plug into them.

- Retailers are concerned about flouting **GDPR** policies by integrating with a start-up and sharing customer data.

- A retailer's finance team won't allocate capital for a small test project because it is too small and doesn't move the needle, with the result that only big projects receive funding.

- A retailer's legal team won't sign a contract with a start-up that has no credit history report, regardless of its financing.

- Someone in the approval process for a new project points out that if the test works then the start-up will be hugely successful and says the retailer is just funding its growth.

- Someone else in the process demands that the start-up work with the retailer exclusively and not with any competitors, despite the fact the retailer has only approved a small trial.
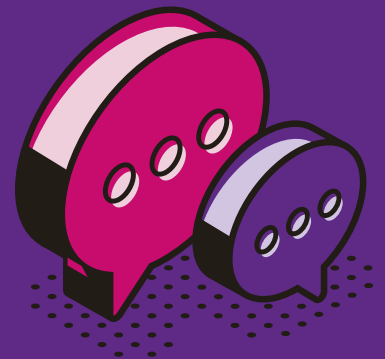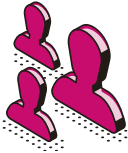
CREATING START-UP SYNERGIES

Now is the time for retailers and brands to think about how they could work differently with the start-up community. Retailers should take a moment to consider the following approaches:

- Creating a fast-track, light-touch process for forming contractual relationships with start-ups.

- Collaborating with legal and finance departments to overcome some of the concerns around working with start-ups and speeding up the due diligence process.

- Exploring if any risks can be taken with regards to intellectual property.

- Pre-allocating some funding that can be used for trials, without layers of additional governance.

- Being ready to celebrate failed experiments for the learning points that they are, and to grab hold of successes.

- Treating start-up partners as friends and advisers, and in turn being a friend and adviser to them.
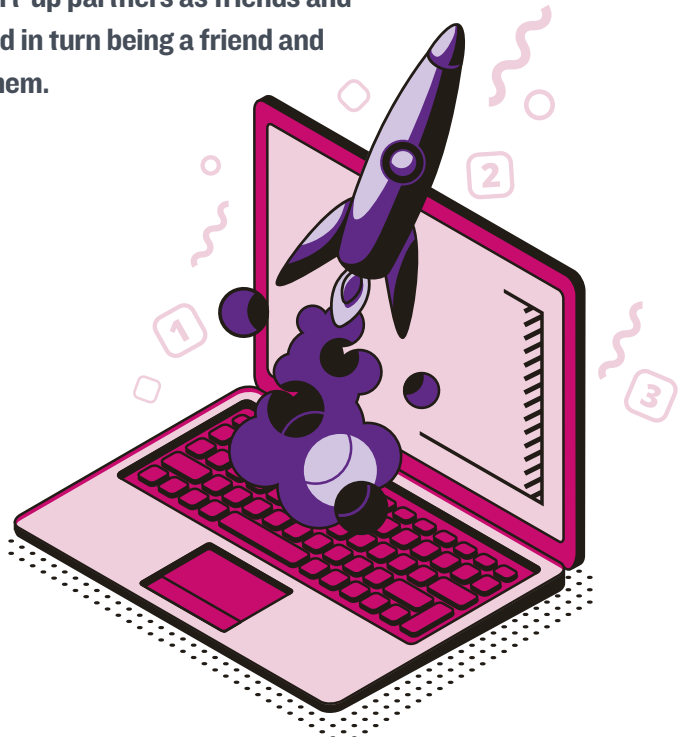
CHAPTER 2

MEET THE DISCOVERY 50: JUDGES' TOP PICKS

From Google to Facebook and Instagram, many of the world's biggest tech companies came from humble beginnings as start-ups. While the following tech start-ups don't yet match their ranks, our judges believe these 10 businesses have the greatest potential to transform retail
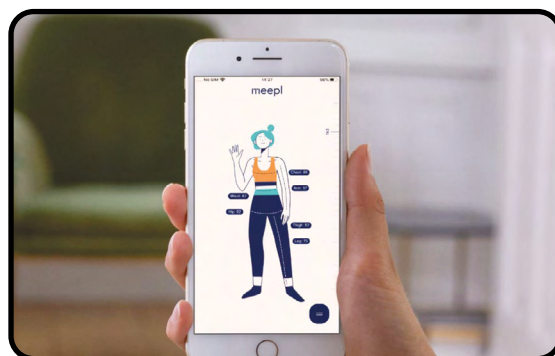
meepl

meepl
Based: Zurich, Switzerland
Founded by: Ferdinand Metzler
Starting trading: May 2015
Website: meepl.com
Email: info@meepl.com
Employees: 30

Helps fashion retailers

Retailers are wising up to the fact that personalisation makes customers feel special and can have a big impact on the bottom line. However, delivering a personalised shopping experience online can be tricky.

With its instant 3D body-reconstruction platform, meepl wants to help fashion ecommerce retailers offer an interactive and personalised online shopping experience.

Using meepl's AI-based technology, any customer with a smartphone can submit two body scans to create a 3D avatar and a list of more than 50 measurements within seconds; data that retailers can then use to offer made-to-measure size recommendations and a 3D virtual dressing-room service.

By making recommendations customised to the shopper, retailers benefit from reduced return rates and therefore achieve greater efficiencies in their supply chains.

AlphaTauri, Red Bull's Austrian clothing brand, partnered with meepl in January 2017. Key for AlphaTauri was the need to offer photo-realistic 3D clothing models to provide its customers with a new and more personalised way of shopping.

Since rolling out the service, tests have shown AlphaTauri's virtual dressing room has led to higher consumer engagement, increases in upselling and cross-selling, and has driven up consumer loyalty.

Bridging the gap between personalisation and shopping experiences, meepl has big ambitions for its technology. The start-up's vision is to make fashion more sustainable by reducing by 30% the clothes that get returned or end up in landfill.

WHAT THE JUDGES SAID: "Returns is a £60bn problem for UK retail. Through its innovative technology, meepl is enabling retailers to benefit from visual feedback on size and fit so that they make significant inroads in reducing return rates. With customers shifting to online shopping, we envision demand growing for a service like this."
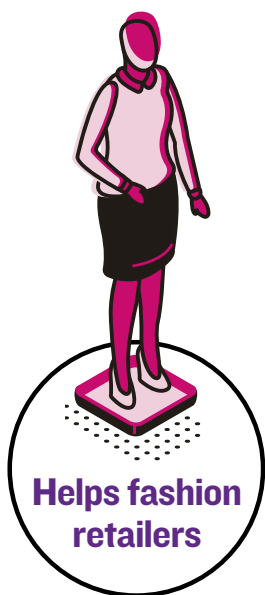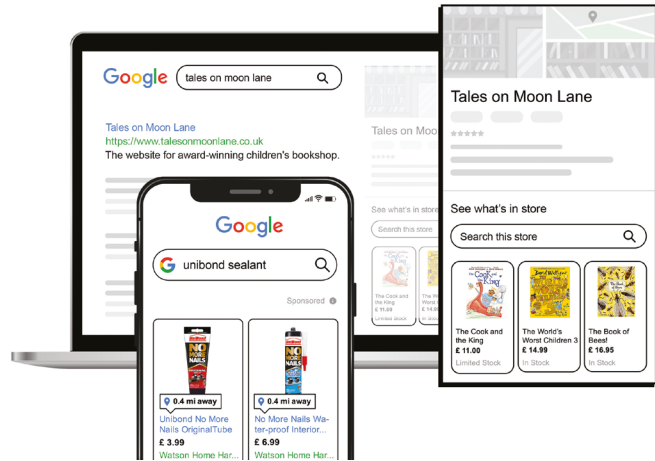
Near st

NearSt

Based: London, UK

Founded by: Nick Brackenbury and Max Kreijn

Starting trading: July 2015

Website: near.st

Email: nick@near.st

Employees: 14

While bricks-and-mortar retailers close their doors to tackle the impact of coronavirus, the crisis is likely to have a long-term impact on consumer shopping habits. Once the country recovers and shops reopen, retailers – particularly smaller stores – are going to need all the help they can get to attract customers back to the high street.

Founded in 2015, NearSt helps high street shops drive footfall by improving the likelihood that they'll show up in local Google search results.

Shoppers are searching online more than ever but NearSt says almost all search phrases such as "where can I find ... near me" often return no relevant results. This means local stores with thousands of matching products do not appear in the millions of searches shoppers are making.

Having created a piece of software that integrates with any stock management system, NearSt's solution addresses this problem and shows shoppers that the things they're searching for online are often stocked in stores nearby.

Backed by Google since 2018, NearSt's search technology typically sends 5,000 extra customers a month into UK high street stores. Having recently secured £2m seed funding, it plans to grow this to more than 100,000 a month by December 2020.

NearSt says retailers are reaping the rewards of its tech, generating up to 400 new customer interactions a month.

Kibworth Books in Leicestershire, for instance, paid NearSt £2 a day to appear in local Google searches for book titles for two weeks around World Book Day. As a result, owner Debbie James says: "Looking at the statistics it was worth it, you can safely say footfall increased."

WHAT THE JUDGES SAID: "NearSt is making it as easy to shop locally as it is online and enabling smaller retailers, lacking the scope and budgets of larger brands, to compete. Once the UK lockdown is lifted, high street retailers are going to need to work hard to reach consumers and this solution offers a helping hand."

Improves retailers' SEO
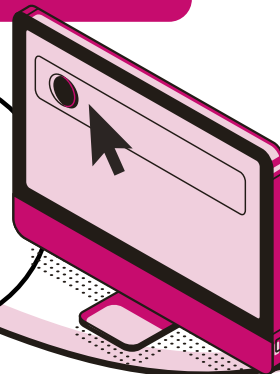
Stuffstr

Based: London, UK
Chief executive: Dustin Buttner
Started trading: October 2019
Website: stuffstr.com
Email: dustin@stuffstr.com
Employees: 15
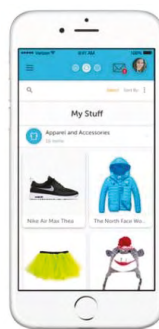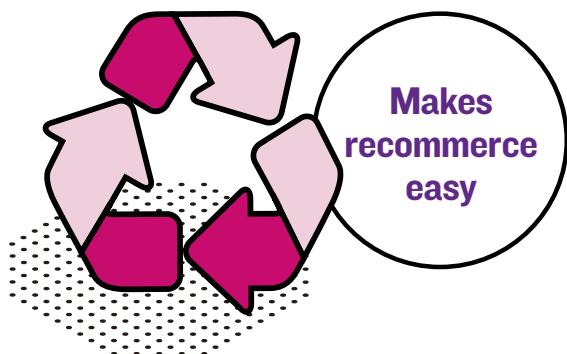

1. GET YOUR STUFF 2. SEE RECOMMENDATIONS 3. SWIPE TO GIVE

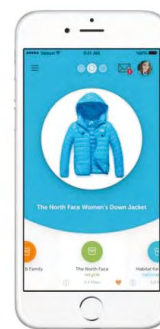**W**ith fashion sustainability vital for retail competitiveness, Stuffstr has designed a solution to help make recommerce easy. The start-up partners with fashion brands to buy back used clothing so textiles can stay out of landfill. It is committed to reselling, repairing or recycling every garment returned to it using real-time pricing algorithms.

This process means retailers can maximise the lifetime value of their items and, through Stuffstr's data collection, can access unique data on their customers' behaviour and the condition of their products.

In 2019 Stuffstr partnered with adidas to launch its Infinite Play service. This service enabled members of adidas' Creators Club to instantly sell back any item purchased from adidas in the past five years and to gain rewards in the form of vouchers to spend with the brand.

Promoting the service to consumers in its December 2019 advert, adidas said: "Instead of throwing it away, pass it on and get rewarded for it. Trade it in and we'll collect it. You get rewarded in vouchers and we'll make sure it's sorted, cleaned, repaired and reused by someone new or we'll turn it into something new.

"If we keep it in play, together we'll keep it out of waste."

WHAT THE JUDGES SAID: "Stuffstr is leading the way in fashion sustainability by committing to resell, repair or recycle every single item of clothing it is sent. We'll see more brands looking to get involved with this as fast fashion and waste is something that cannot be ignored, and it gives retailers a way to make money from it too."

Makes recommerce easy

StorIQ

StorIQ

Based: London, UK

Founded by: Peter Wake

Started trading: August 2014

Website: storiq.net

Email: info@storiq.net

Employees: 13

Manages store operations

UK high streets have been hit hard by coronavirus and retailers can't assume that shopping levels and footfall will return to normal levels once the crisis has passed. Indeed, bricks-and-mortar brands will have a task on their hands, and improving store efficiencies and employee engagement to support their bottom line will be high up on the agenda.

This is where StorIQ comes in. A task management and retail operations platform, StorIQ merges store communications, task management, visual merchandising compliance and store visits together in one app.

By combining compliance reporting, organised photos and a store visit app, the start-up says its solution increases productivity in stores while providing a "transformational level of visibility" for retail operations staff and area managers.

Since its launch in 2014, StorIQ has worked with retailers including Crew Clothing and Dobbies Garden Centres. Its partnership with Crew Clothing, for instance, has helped the fashion brand manage day-to-day operations across its 80 stores.

Crew Clothing's commercial director says: "Until we started using StorIQ, photos of store windows and interiors were circulating round the business as email attachments, in PowerPoint presentations or as printouts. It was hard to measure the degree of compliance and was highly inefficient.

"Our database of visuals means that we can view any store area, such as tills or fitting rooms, and make them consistent with the campaign strategy."

WHAT THE JUDGES SAID: "StorIQ now works across 55 countries and in 22 languages across all retail sectors, helping not just top-level managers but in-store staff too. It provides the whole package and, in turn, enables store and area managers to see the bigger picture when visiting stores."
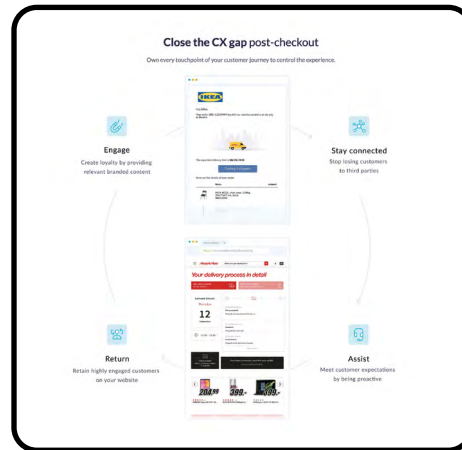
parcelLab

The coronavirus is putting incredible strain on the world's economy and it's likely that many store-based companies will struggle to survive. However, according to data and analytics company GlobalData, Covid-19 will have a long-term positive effect on the ecommerce sector, with even sceptical consumers forced to turn to online shopping in response to restrictions on movement.

Ecommerce retailers can use this time to increase customer loyalty and to promote messaging and marketing more productively, not just via their websites and checkout pages but in purchase confirmation emails and delivery updates.

Enter parcelLab. The shipping tech start-up provides various tools for retailers to manage the customer experience after the online checkout, rather than giving that responsibility to third-party carriers.

The tech enables users to monitor shipments and communicate with customers in multiple ways post product purchase.

Key retail clients of parcelLab include supermarket chain Lidl, as well as the European consumer electronics retailer MediaMarktSaturn.

Through the parcelLab tie-up, Lidl's online customers receive personalised emails informing them of their order status. The start-up also built Lidl an integrated and white-labelled Facebook Messenger Chatbot, which provides customers visiting the retailer's Facebook page with a chance to receive instant notifications about their delivery.

A key target for retailers using parcelLab's technology is to get customers to return to their websites. The vendor reports that 85% of Lidl's online customers return to the grocer's website during the delivery process – the majority from the direct tracking link included in shipping emails.

Innovating ecommerce delivery

WHAT THE JUDGES SAID: "ParcelLab turns boring shipping information into real communication, offering customers the tools to monitor shipments. Clearly a win for customers and retailers, and it demonstrates how a retailer can control a tricky touchpoint, turning it to their advantage."

ONVU Retail

Based: London, UK
President: Nigel Ashman
Started trading: July 2018
Website: onvuretail.com
Email: nigel.ashman@onvuretail.com
Employees: 8

Knowing the customer at surface level is no longer enough for today's retailers and the focus now for many in the industry is getting a deeper understanding of consumer behaviour – particularly in store where data is harder to track than online.

ONVU Retail – in conjunction with sister company Oncam's 360-degree cameras – offers analytics software that can be used to better understand customer behaviour at the shelf edge, improve security or generally tweak store operations based on filmed evidence.

The cameras and analytics combine to give users a granular view of which type of shopper is/isn't buying products, for example.

Since partnering with Next in 2019, ONVU Retail's tech has been installed in more than 130 of the retailer's stores helping reduce shrinkage, but also aiding visual merchandising, marketing, operational, legal and health and safety endeavours.

Retailers working with ONVU Retail can use the technology for specific projects, with Next recently deploying it to monitor the behaviour of customers collecting online orders in store. Next has adapted store layout, queue management and staff training based on the findings.

Next group market research manager Rebecca Weightman says: "The customer behaviour service that ONVU Retail provides Next is one of our most valuable resources in terms of understanding how to optimise the operation and profitability of our stores, and the 360 video makes the results so much more understandable and impactive."

WHAT THE JUDGES SAID: "ONVU Retail delivers unique insights into store penetration, service, shopping time and the effectiveness of displays. For Next, the information ONVU has provided is invaluable, in terms of understanding how to optimise the operation and profitability of their stores."

Offers valuable customer insights

ometria

Ometria

Based: London, UK

Founded by: Ivan Mazour, Alastair James, James Dunford Wood and Djalal Lougouev

Started trading: February 2013

Website: ometria.com

Email: info@ometria.com

Employees: 110

Delivers personalised marketing

Personalised online communication with customers has been a key focus area in retail for several years. With retailers competing for share of wallet with more companies than ever before, marketing relevancy is crucial.

London start-up Ometria collects and aggregates data from all customer touchpoints, profiles the information using artificial intelligence (AI) processes and allows retailers to send the most effective marketing messages based on individual shopper habits.

The platform was built specifically for retailers and online beauty retailer Feelunique is a high-profile user. The retailer embedded the tech to automate email newsletter creation and help individually design them for each consumer.

Ometria's tech crunches the data and populates the newsletters around a series of personal insights, including browsing and purchasing behaviour and the activities of similar shoppers.

Compared with Feelunique's previous newsletters that relied on rule-based segmentation, Ometria says the AI-segmented email campaign helped achieve a 95% uplift in revenue per email, a 33% increase in click-to-open rate and a 12% hike in average order value.

Alongside these results, Feelunique's marketing team saved hours of manual work in segmenting the audience. The extra revenue generated by using Ometria's AI predictive segmentation was complemented by the time won back for the team, who were able to focus on even further innovations while the AI did the hard work.
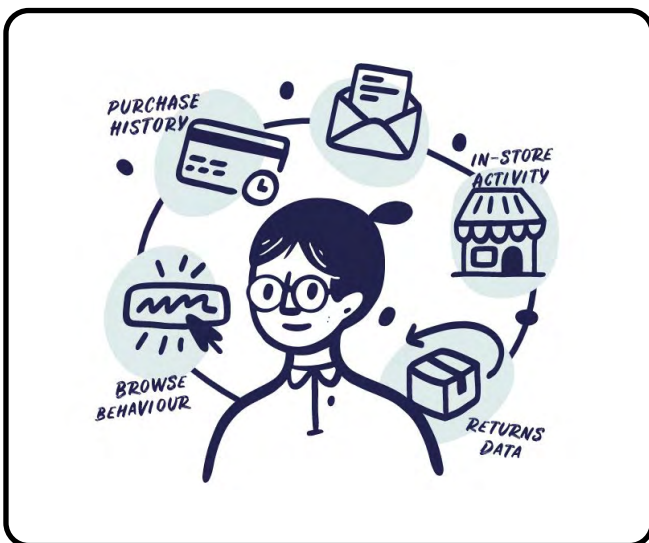
WHAT THE JUDGES SAID: "Using Ometria's platform, Feelunique's team saved hours of work in segmenting the audience, which wouldn't have been possible without machine learning. Harnessing AI to review data at speed leaving teams to work on creative content has to be the future."

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TokyWoky

TokyWoky

Based: London, UK

Founded by: Quentin Lebeau, Timothée Deschamps and Raphaël Prat

Started trading: January 2015

Website: tokywoky.com

Email: james@tokywoky.com

Employees: 17

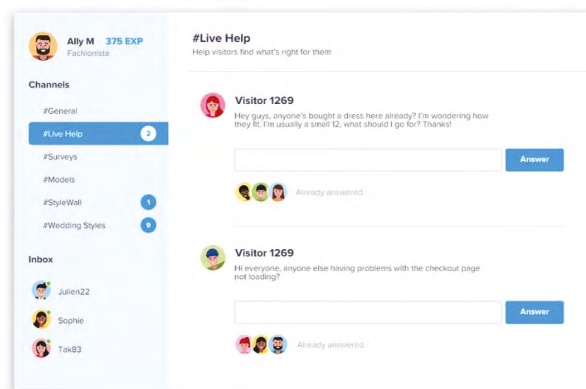A t an unprecedented time like this, it will be the retailers with true brand advocates that will cut through the noise. To create these advocates, customer communication needs to focus on community-building efforts and addressing consumers' changing needs and concerns.

Tapping into this new retail landscape, TokyWoky builds customised online communities for retailers, using a combination of live chat or "coaching" platforms that enable customers to talk to each other about products and services while on their websites.

TokyWoky helps more than 130 global brands in this way, often using gamification as a method of engagement to prolong time spent by consumers on these platforms.

Superdrug started working with TokyWoky in 2019 to launch an online community platform featuring live chat and make-up advice channels as well as thematic discussion groups. It has been updated to include a product test and review channel, and Superdrug plans to develop the service as its 6,000+ community evolves and grows.

The ultimate goal for Superdrug was to morph into a "beauty destination" where enthusiasts could share reviews and tips.

The retailer says TokyWoky's supported platform has helped it to generate authentic customer reviews and in-depth shopper insights, while also keeping shoppers on its site for longer.

WHAT THE JUDGES SAID: "TokyWoky is balancing retailers' needs to engage with customers while enabling them to increase site conversations and keep their brand front of mind. As retailers work to refresh their online presence in the current circumstances, this solution is needed now more than ever."
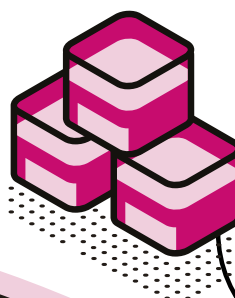
Builds retail communities

Sook

Based: Cambridge, UK
Founded by: John Hoyle, Simon Gallagher and Daniel Burnham
Started trading: March 2019
Website: sook.space
Email: john@sook.space
Employees: 6

There was already a backdrop of pressures for high street retailers – from managing store tenancy agreements and business rates to competing online – and the pandemic has intensified these and then some.

Once the UK lockdown is lifted, bricks-and-mortar retailers will have to work collaboratively with landlords and think carefully about the shop space they occupy.

Cambridge-based start-up Sook presents retailers and brands with physical selling space only when they need it.

Sook turns otherwise unwanted commercial sites into usable brand spaces, aided by its proprietary technology that allows interested parties to design their stores online and preview in 3D model format or in virtual reality prior to fit-out.

Sook partners can rent space by the hour and the start-up has identified 40 potential sites across the UK.

Since it started trading in 2019, Sook has catered for more than 60 different occupiers, including e-bike manufacturer Flit and packaging-free grocery refills delivery business unpckd.

Flit used Sook for a crowdfunding launch event, and then again to host test rides with customers and to create a shop.

The bike retailer took advantage of Sook's digital fit-out offering and in-store digital screens to support the design, and on the occasion of the test ride estimated revenue was 10 times the cost of renting the space.

WHAT THE JUDGES SAID: "Vacancies on the high street are going to become a big issue for landlords, local councils and residents alike this year. Sook might just be the right start-up at the right time. We hope to see much more of this innovation in empty shops around the country."
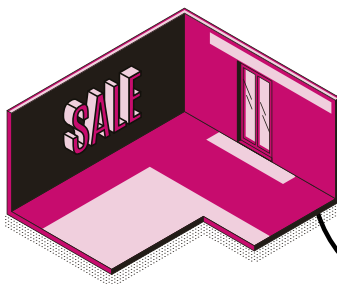
Adapts vacant retail spaces

LOYALTY**LION**

LoyaltyLion

Based: London, UK
Founded by: Charlie Casey and Dave Clark
Started trading: July 2013
Website: loyaltylion.com
Email: info@loyaltylion.com
Employees: 35

Offers data-driven loyalty programmes

Big changes have been made to retail loyalty programmes of late, with paper-based stamp collecting schemes evolving into card and app-based initiatives for the digital age.

London start-up LoyaltyLion is a data-driven loyalty marketing platform that can be used to power retailers' growth online.

The company offers merchants a fully customisable loyalty programme embedded on their websites to encourage repeat visits and reward consumers.

LoyaltyLion has helped companies such as health and wellness online retailer Ancient Nutrition to build its own tailored customer loyalty programme.

Its Ancient Nutrition loyalty scheme was built with 'in-cart rewards', enabling shoppers to redeem points for products and have them automatically added to their shopping basket, avoiding use of voucher codes.

Other features include the integration of a subscriber tier, giving loyal customers access to exclusive rewards, and a tool showing changes to points values as items are added to carts, thus encouraging larger basket sizes.

After partnering with Ancient Nutrition in 2017, in the space of a year the etailer achieved marked results including 60% higher average order value, 47% higher customer spend and 80% higher conversion rates across certain product lines.

The retailer's vice-president of brand marketing Kate Johnson says: "LoyaltyLion has been a great partner in helping develop a highly customised programme, which has created an amazing experience for our customers and has driven consistent and measurable improvement in all of our performance metrics."

WHAT THE JUDGES SAID: "With more choices available to everyone, shopper loyalty is harder to win and maintain. What we liked about LoyaltyLion's approach to this problem is that it is working with clients to deliver a frictionless solution, incentivising shoppers by visualising the value of their loyalty, and making offers and rewards instantly accessible."

MEET THE DISCOVERY 50

Offering solutions to help retailers achieve everything from advanced personalisation and customer engagement to supply chain efficiencies and productivity, here are the 40 start-ups that also made our judges' shortlist — and for good reason. Find out more about their stories and how retailers can partner with them to achieve success:

Common Objective

Based: London, UK
Founded by: Tamsin Lejeune
Started trading: May 2018
Website: commonobjective.co
Email: tamsin@commonobjective.co
Employees: 7

Consumers are increasingly switching to shopping with purpose-driven fashion retailers that understand their sensitivities. Retail Week research conducted in 2018 found that 30% of UK consumers were shopping with new retailers because of environmental concerns.

One start-up stepping up to help fashion retailers meet this need is Common Objective. A global business-to-business sourcing and information platform, Common Objective offers more than 300 resources and tools to help retailers make sustainable choices with confidence.

With a network of 26,000 fashion members including brands such as Nike, LVMH and Inditex, and thousands of small-and medium-sized businesses, the start-up helps users find sustainable suppliers and create sustainable product ranges.

It has provided intelligence tools and training on sustainability best practice to teams from Stella McCartney, Farfetch and Kering.

It has also been working with fashion brands such as Vivienne Westwood through partnerships. It offers workshops and content developed with retailers to enable their teams to implement sustainability measures — such as creating ethical sourcing strategies and reducing energy use — across departments.

As purpose becomes even more influential in shaping consumers' shopping decisions, Common Objective says fashion is "just the beginning" and it wants to help more businesses "turn sustainability from a cost, to an opportunity".

SPARKBOX

Sparkbox

Based: Southampton,UK
Founded by: Lindsay Fisher and Kevin Blackmore
Started trading: October 2018
Website: sparkbox.co
Email: lindsay@sparkbox.co
Employees: 7

Controlling inventory levels is crucial for retail. Faced with the frontline impact of coronavirus, retailers are carefully managing the risks to their supply chain.

Sparkbox wants to support retailers in making the most of the inventory they

already own. Its AI-based price optimisation technology helps retailers make sense of data to inform their pricing strategy and meet inventory targets.

It has been working with retailers to help them forecast the outcome of their pricing decisions to avoid over-discounting top-selling products and under-discounting overstocked items.

With pricing decisions incredibly important to retail's bottom line – Sparkbox says a 1% discount, on average, reduces profitability by 10% – the start-up has been training its machine-learning algorithms to support retailers' existing trading and product data.

In a recent trial, the start-up's price recommendations were implemented and, over a seven-week period, the retailer more than doubled cash margin on its high-performing lines and improved volume sales by 42% on its most problematic stock.

Sparkbox is currently working with Pimkie, a European fast-fashion retailer, having completed a successful trial period last year.

products based on data, such as customer demand, sell-out rates and decreasing leftover items, instead of making inventory decisions based on "intuition".

The start-up counts fashion retailers including Versace, Pepe Jeans, Hackett and River Island as customers.

Its partnership with River Island began in 2019 and sought to help the fashion retailer better manage its stock online and in store, avoiding end-of-season excess inventory while minimising out-of-stocks.

Using Nextail's forecasting and optimisation engine, River Island has gained a unified view of inventory across channels and can then allocate stock based on the selling probability.

River Island senior allocator Charlotte Inge says: "Nextail has made my job easier by automatically replenishing link lines so I don't have to allocate manually. This has saved me so much time.

"I can quickly see my bestsellers and review out-of-stocks. It allows me to find areas in need of improvement quickly".

nextail

Nextail
Based: Madrid, Spain
Founded by: Joaquin Villalba
Started trading: October 2014
Website: nextail.co
Email: info@nextail.co
Employees: 95

Retailers are beginning to take the transformative power of AI seriously and realise its potential. One start-up determined to prove its ROI is Nextail.

A platform designed for merchandisers, Nextail enables retailers to sell more with less stock through hyper-local demand forecasting and automation. Its AI analytics allow retailers to allocate and distribute

Scurri

Scurri
Based: Wexford, Ireland
Founded by: Rory O'Connor
Started trading: January 2014
Website: scurri.com
Email: marketing@scurri.com
Employees: 34

With the UK's departure from the EU and the mounting impact of coronavirus, retailers are likely to be investing more in their online businesses to meet consumer demand. Next boss Lord Wolfson recently ruminated that the "pandemic may accelerate the transition to online shopping".

A renewed focus on online means retailers will also need to invest more time and money in their delivery processes.

Software start-up Scurri is designed to

connect and optimise retailers' ecommerce ordering, shipping and delivery, and provide a cost-effective, time-saving solution.

Scurri says it adds value at multiple stages along the ecommerce journey, from helping to get purchases over the line to selecting the most effective delivery option for each package, creating accurate labels, tracking packages and running analytics.

Recipe box business Gousto partnered with Scurri to create a tailored shipping API that would improve its delivery performance. Gousto had been spending 90 minutes a day preparing shipments but, using Scurri's automated system, it has now been able to prep shipments 85% faster.

Gousto head of logistics Bobby Amirahmadi says Scurri played a "fundamental part in helping us to grow our logistical operation. We were able to move to a much slicker automated process."

Catapult

Based: London, UK
Founded by: Oli Johnson, Ben Dixon and Steffen Wulff Peterson
Started trading: July 2015
Website: catapult.com
Email: team@catapult.com
Employees: 55

The world of work is changing. We've seen the rise of the gig economy, the growth of part-time roles, flexible working and the demographic make-up of the workforce shift.

Catapult was launched in 2015 with a mission to reshape the future of work.

Its platform enables retailers in the UK and Germany to source flexible workers on demand using its 10,000-strong candidate network. Retailers can also use it to share colleagues across their sites and to work with alumni staff.

In turn, candidates can pick the shifts that suit them at retail and hospitality brands including Topshop, Planet Organic, New Look, Marston's Pubs and more.

The start-up's offering helps retailers reduce time and money spent recruiting short-term staff while helping them capture additional sales at peak periods.

Cafe chain Planet Organic has worked with Catapult to reduce the time it spends on recruitment and to retain existing staff, many of whom have lengths of service of over four years.

Utilising Catapult's staff to cover peaks, Planet Organic says it saved money on recruitment and freed up time by reducing the number of roles it needed to hire for. Moreover, its Tottenham Court Road store saw a nearly 50% reduction in staff turnover six months after implementation.

Mercaux

Based: London, UK
Founded by: Olga Kotsur
Started trading: February 2015
Website: mercaux.com
Email: hello@mercaux.com
Employees: 48

Ecommerce enables customers to search for items by product category, access style recommendations, build up their profile using purchase data and so much more. But what if stores could offer these same benefits?

Mercaux offers a solution that equips stores with digital tools to serve and sell smarter across the customer journey.

Operated by associates using a tablet-based app or self-served by customers using touchscreen kiosks, the solution enables staff and customers to instantly check stock availability, access styling recommendations, reserve products and show how an outfit has been worn by others on social platforms such as Instagram.

Mercaux says it increases in-store sales by an average of 8% while the data pulled from its in-store tech enables retailers to build a customer profile and access purchase history such as the consumer's last store visit and average spend.

The business has helped retailers including Nike, French Connection and Benetton adopt its digital tools in their stores.

Since partnering with Mercaux in

October 2017, French Connection says it has benefited from a 5%-7% sales uplift in store sales, while also saving staff more than 550 working hours.

LiSA

Based: Düsseldorf, Germany
Founded by: Sophie and Philippe Frères
Started trading: May 2018
Website: hello-lisa.com
Email: sophie@hello-lisa.com
Employees: 4

As retailers compete for consumer attention online, cutting through the noise and reaching shoppers in the digital spaces where they spend time is paramount.

LiSA (Live Shopping Assistant) has built an innovative shopping format that enables online retailers to benefit from live-stream shopping to create a "see now, buy now" experience.

To access a retailer's live stream, consumers join via a link from any platform or source, such as Facebook, WhatsApp or Instagram, and retailers run the stream on their own domain. The service also combines a live group chat so consumers can ask questions about products in real time.

The German start-up says its live streams generate up to 600% more engagement than recorded videos, which leads to higher sales conversion.

In December 2019, LiSA partnered with shopping channel QVC to offer its online live-stream format to the German market. QVC's first live show ran on February 3, 2020 with a 30-minute live stream to present a range of its exclusive products.

QVC is now planning to run further live shopping shows in Germany with LiSA and intends to expand the pilot to other countries.

Spoon Guru

Based: London, UK
Founded by: Markus Stripf, Tim Allen and Simon O'Regan
Started trading: April 2015
Website: spoon.guru
Email: hello@spoon.guru
Employees: 36

With restaurants, fast-food chains and cafes shut due to the pandemic, consumers are cooking at home or using prepared meals more than ever before.

As consumers become more au fait with home cooking, they're likely to seek out high-quality ingredients and products that cater to their dietary requirements – presenting a growth opportunity.

Winner of the 2018 Retail Week Award for Customer Innovation, Spoon Guru's AI platform enables retailers to offer customers search functionality for ingredients or recipes based on their unique, dietary, health and wellness needs.

The platform processes billions of data points daily and analyses every ingredient, as well as its nutritional value, to allocate the appropriate dietary tags such as 'vegan', 'low cholesterol' and 'gluten free' to each product or recipe.

Retailers using the technology benefit from offering a greater choice for consumers, better conversion to sale, larger basket size and increased brand loyalty.

Since trading began in 2018, the start-up has partnered with retailers around the world from Tesco in the UK, Albert Heijn in the Netherlands, and Woolworths in Australia and New Zealand.

Tesco, for example, integrated Spoon Guru's API back in 2018. The supermarket's category head says it "has had a really positive, demonstrable impact on our online grocery business since launch".

VeeLoop

Based: Essex, UK
Founded by: Randa Bennett and Patricia Salume
Started trading: October 2018
Website: veeloop.com
Email: randa@veeloop.com
Employees: 5

Today's teenagers grew up learning to swipe before they could talk. In 2018, market research company Mintel found 95% of UK teenagers owned a smartphone while 70% of parents reported their teenagers having spent money online.

This group have major spending power but it's not that easy for retailers to harness, particularly online. Mintel also found that only 21% of teenagers had made online purchases using their own bank account meaning that the majority needed to ask a parent to pay for them, leading to abandoned baskets.

VeeLoop's solution gives teenagers the independence to shop online safely while parents and guardians retain full visibility and control. The service enables any teenager shopping with a VeeLoop retailer to send their basket to a designated parent or guardian to approve and pay.

To date, VeeLoop has partnered with retailers including Feelunique, Prima Makeup and HYPE. Its partnership with streetwear brand HYPE began in July 2019 and one month after implementation VeeLoop received 4,000 baskets from young shoppers using HYPE's website. These baskets converted into more than 1,500 orders with an average order value of £29.

HYPE creative director Liam Green says of the tie-up: "We expected a positive return when implementing VeeLoop, but we received so much more."

Omnia Retail

Based: Amsterdam, the Netherlands
Founded by: Sander Roose
Started trading: January 2015
Website: omniaretail.com
Email: esther@omniaretail.com
Employees: 30

The UK has long-had a productivity problem. In fact, February 2020 government figures show that productivity levels are now at their lowest in 250 years, with these figures likely to be compounded further by the crisis.

Studies show businesses with higher productivity levels are more likely to benefit from improved financial performance and have better employee engagement.

Omnia Retail wants to help retailers make their processes more efficient by automating tasks. The start-up's technology automates pricing for retail assortments by scanning and analysing more than 500 million price points to make over 7 million price adjustments daily.

Working with more than 100 retailers and brands, including Decathlon, Bol.com and Philips, Omnia says it enables businesses to build more profitable pricing and marketing strategies.

In 2018, Omnia partnered with German baby and children's retailer Windeln to help its team — who were spending two to three hours a day manually checking and adjusting item prices — save time and resources.

Within five weeks, Windeln was automating its entire pricing process, from collecting competitor prices to updating its own prices in response.

Within three months Windeln had grown net revenue by 10% and increased its gross margins by 2%-3%. It said employees were also noticeably happier without the manual tasks.

RWRC DISCOVERY 50

Flux

Based: London, UK
Founded by: Matty Cusden-Ross, Veronique Merriam Barbosa and Tom Reay
Started training: April 2017
Website: tryflux.com
Email: hello@tryflux.com
Employees: 34

All retailers want to engage their customers meaningfully but, with many UK shoppers believing it no longer pays to be brand loyal (47% according to a 2019 Ello Media report), achieving true customer engagement is no mean feat.

With its digital receipts and rewards platform, Flux aims to enable retailers to increase their customer retention.

Flux provides users with an itemised receipt delivered straight into their Barclays, Starling or Monzo banking app whenever they shop at a Flux-supported retailer or brand. Once activated via the customer's banking app, the technology is completely seamless, requiring no additional apps or QR codes.

Retailers benefit from the service in three key ways; reducing their carbon footprint by putting an end to paper receipts, capturing customer data such as a shopper's store location and time of purchase, and using Flux to connect customers with their own loyalty programmes. For instance, if customers opt in retailers can engage them with personalised rewards sent straight to their banking app.

Since it commenced trading in 2017, Flux has secured almost 250,000 users and, as of January 2020, was attracting around 700 new users per day. The retailers and brands it works with include Schuh, KFC, Just Eat and Itsu.

Thyngs

Based: Norwich, UK
Founded by: Dr Neil Garner
Started trading: April 2016
Website: thyngs.net
Email: hello@thyngs.net
Employees: 10

'Phygital' – the merging of physical and digital retail – has become something of a buzzword to describe the changing face of the industry and it's only likely to gain momentum this year.

Once the pandemic ends, retailers will need to double down on reinventing their stores and ensuring they work more in tandem with their omnichannel strategies.

Thyngs is a phygital platform that enables retailers to turn any physical marketing object, such as a product, signage or even a member of staff, into an interactive transactional point-of-sale (POS) terminal.

Using near field communication (NFC) and Apple Pay, consumers shopping in store can scan a Thyngs POS terminal to make a purchase, cashless donation, register for a reward programme, enter a competition and more.

In 2019, Thyngs' technology was used by food brand Wasabi to enable on-pack promotions for a competition giving customers the chance to win a trip to Japan. The promotions featured on its Home Bento range across 200 Sainsbury's supermarkets, with a winner announced from 40,000 applicants.

Wasabi increased its customer engagement and encouraged multiple purchases. Thyngs also said that its work with Wasabi realised a 10% uplift in conversion and drove a 37% data opt-in rate from competition entrants – 10% higher than Facebook advertising statistics.

intelistyle

Intelistyle
Based: London, UK
Founded by: Kostas Koukoravas and Michael Michelis
Started trading: February 2019
Website: intelistyle.com
Email: hello@intelistyle.com
Employees: 8

It's no surprise that customer engagement is a common thread among our Discovery 50.

A 2019 report from Forrester Consulting argued that customer obsession should drive retailers' strategies and said that to support more meaningful engagement marketers need to move beyond traditional personalisation to deliver customised experiences.

One start-up helping retailers to follow this trend is Intelistyle.

Using AI technology, Intelistyle allows fashion retailers to personalise their offering by making recommendations based on a customer's body type, hair colour, skin tone, personal style and the latest regional trends.

The start-up says its fashion-specific personalisation enables retailers to increase revenue by up to 10% and to generate more repeat purchases.

In the past year, Intelistyle has worked with retailers including Dubai department store chain Tryano and Hong Kong fashion retailer Lane Crawford.

The partnership with Tryano involved integrating Intelistyle's solutions across the retailer's shopping channels so customers would receive specific styling recommendations. It helped increase revenue by 10% and basket size by 42%.

Tryano is working with Intelistyle to integrate the service with in-store virtual fitting room solution iMirror to enable customers to obtain access to personalised styling advice when trying on clothes.

donde

Donde Search
Based: New York, USA
Founded by: Liat Zakay
Started trading: January 2016
Website: dondesearch.com
Email: hello@dondesearch.com
Employees: 15

Data shows that 87% of consumers now begin product searches online, reiterating the need for frictionless ecommerce shopping experiences.

While most retailers offer text search functionality on their websites, Donde Search has sought to expand the boundaries into visual search navigation.

The New York-based start-up uses computer vision and AI to automatically tag online product catalogues, enabling shoppers to discover products based on visual cues rather than words.

Donde Search says this feature is needed as "words are limited in describing something visual" and shoppers do not always know how to "say" what they are looking for.

For instance, if a shopper was looking for an off-the-shoulder dress but didn't know the exact fashion term of 'Bardot', Donde Search allows the shopper to search via an icon that matches an image of the dress they're looking for.

US fashion retailer Revolve is one of Donde Search's partners. Its chief executive and co-founder Michael Mente says the platform generated significant results: "We've seen an increase in conversions as high as 16% in key categories for our business. Visual discovery is critical to providing an authentic online shopping experience. We are taking the guesswork out of shopping for our customers."

HURR
COLLECTIVE

Hurr Collective

Based: London, UK
Founded by: Victoria Prew
Started trading: March 2018
Website: hurrcollective.com
Email: contact@hurrcollective.com
Employees: 7

Consumers are reaching 'peak stuff'. According to trend forecasting company WGSN Insight senior editor Laura Saunter: "Shoppers are turning away from excessive consumption amid greater concern for the environment and growing product fatigue."

As shoppers purchase less and the trend towards pre-loved or reusing things grows, it makes sense for retailers – particularly those in fashion – to consider new business models.

Hurr is a wardrobe rental platform that allows members to share their clothes and accessories, and make money from their items in return.

Describing itself as the "Airbnb of fashion", the start-up wants to disrupt fashion ownership and help support sustainable retail.

While the platform is currently peer-to-peer, Hurr is in the process of running trials with retailers and brands. It recently worked with department store Selfridges at its Oxford Street branch for a six-month pop-up to enable in-store shoppers to rent pieces from designers such as Gucci, Mara Hoffman, Ganni and Rixo.

While the pop-up had to be put on hold after six weeks due to the pandemic, the partnership was a first of its kind for Selfridges and represents how this type of shopping option could become more permanent.

engagement agents

Engagement Agents

Based: Ontario, Canada
Founded by: Sean Snyder
Started trading: May 2016
Website: engagementagents.com
Email: sean@engagementagents.com
Employees: 7

Coronavirus is set to wipe £12.6bn from retail sales this year, GlobalData predicts, and shopping centres will be among the hardest hit.

With most stores either closed or severely affected until May at least, retailers in shopping centres are going to have to rethink their approach to maximise on their investment.

A software-as-a-service (SaaS) platform, Engagement Agents' technology helps retailers drive more traffic and sales to their shopping centre stores while saving money, time and resources.

It provides services such as content distribution, real-time reporting, marketing automation and compliance so that retailers can best engage the shopping centre marketing channels they've already paid for in their lease, such as digital signage, email campaigns and app promotion.

In April 2019, the start-up worked with Spanish jewellery brand UNOde50 to implement its tech across its 20 North American stores. The start-up identified that UNOde50's average engagement with its shopping centre marketing channels over the previous 10 months to April had only been 18%.

Following its three-month pilot with Engagement Agents, UNOde50 saw its shopping centre marketing engagement increase to 96% and sales increase by 15%.

After the trial, UNOde50 implemented the solution across its North American store portfolio and says it has become core to its shopping centre strategy.

Plan Apps

PlanVault
Based: London, UK
Founded by: Joel Hopwood and Matt Lee
Started trading: January 2017
Website: plan-apps.com
Email: mail@lobster-agency.com
Employees: 15

What do consumers buy when they go shopping? How often do they shop? And how much do they spend?

These are key questions brand marketers want to understand to best leverage campaigns with their retail stockists and to know which media opportunities – from billboards to digital screens – they should invest in.

PlanVault – created as part of the PlanApps group and launched by parent company Lobster in 2017 – has created a measurable technology tool to provide the answers.

The tool gives brands an understanding of the effectiveness of their shopper marketing campaigns with retailers across the UK such as Tesco, Asda, Sainsbury's, the Co-op, Morrisons, Waitrose and Walgreens Boots Alliance.

Providing top-line and granular insights, as well as retailer and media channel comparisons, the tool gives brands the opportunity to work collaboratively with retailers to ultimately reach their shoppers.

Used by Unilever, PepsiCo, Mars, Coca-Cola, Ferrero, Mondelez, Weetabix and more, PlanVault says that, in using its data, brands can plan and implement shopper marketing spend "with a level of detail that has not been possible before".

Mars customer activation manager Vikki Emmitt says the solution has "increased sales for the retailer and moved the ROI in a positive direction".

Personify XP
Based: London, UK
Founded by: Ben Mercer and Josh Scotton
Started trading: May 2018
Website: personifyxp.com
Email: ben@personifyxp.com
Employees: 7

Adopting personalisation into online strategies is crucial for engagement, but how do retailers personalise the customer experience when the shopper is anonymous?

Data shows 95% of website visitors are unknown, leading to a 'cold start' problem where online shoppers can't receive the same personalised experience as if they were in a physical store.

Using machine learning and AI, Personify XP has created a platform that enables retailers to convert more anonymous visitors into lifetime customers. Its platform learns why a buyer is purchasing and then uses this data to help retailers automatically recommend related products and services.

The data can also be used by retailers to personalise more than 40 digital experiences via websites, mobile apps, chatbots and other emerging channels in real time.

Since launch in 2018, Personify XP has worked with names including Lovehoney, Hawes & Curtis, Figleaves and Pentland Brands, which it partnered with in September 2019.

Its work with Pentland Brands, owner of sportswear brand Ellesse, helped Ellesse achieve a 12% increase in revenue and an 9% increase in web conversion.

Moreover, Personify XP says it was able to provide the brand with "important insights from which future merchandising and marketing decisions will be made in terms of content production and product attribution".

Looking ahead, the start-up says its goal is to automatically change content areas and templates in real time without marketer involvement.

Aura Vision

Based: London, UK
Founded by: Jonathon Blok and
Daniel Martinho-Corbishley
Started trading: May 2017
Website: auravision.ai
Email: jonathon@auravision.ai
Employees: 10

All bricks-and-mortar retailers have some form of security system, but what if these systems could be leveraged for more than recording daily goings on?

Aura Vision uses video from retailers' security cameras to anonymously capture consumer journeys. It provides retailers with rich information such as the type of people who come to their spaces and what they do once inside.

Retailers can use this information to measure and improve their marketing campaigns and staff performance, while uncovering what behaviours lead to higher conversion rates, as well as support in-store product launches.

In 2019, the start-up ran a trial with Telefonica (O2). O2 was already using a basic store footfall counter but wanted to access more detailed metrics such as venue flow, behavioural and demographic visitor data, product engagement and dwell times.

Aura Vision was able to provide O2 with new insights that, when combined, offered potential revenue gains of £47,000 per store per year. For instance, the start-up found that if O2 staff spent shorter periods of time at service desks, conversion and average transaction value with their primary product line increased.

On the back of the trial, a full partnership with O2 is now being explored.

Shopper Intelligence

Based: West Sussex, UK
Chief executive: Roger Jackson
Started trading: February 2018
Website: shopperintelligence.com
Email: roger.jackson@
shopperintelligence.com
Employees: 4

Shopper research is an ever-evolving field and one start-up that wants to take it a step further is Shopper Intelligence.

The business has created technology called Store Impact that provides a new source of metrics about shopper behaviour to help retailers and manufacturers improve their in-store marketing.

The Store Impact tool can show retailers where shoppers looked and what they noticed at each point of the shopping trip. Its machine-learning-based software 'watches' videos to analyse and measure customer behaviour by working with shoppers who wear video glasses during their trips.

Shopper Intelligence first piloted its software in Australia working with chains such as Coles and Woolworths to ensure their point-of-sale messaging was hitting home in stores.

It ran a UK pilot with Tesco in November 2019, in partnership with General Mills, Unilever and Pladis, to provide large-scale measurement of Tesco customers' shopping behaviours.

While the start-up has predominantly worked with supermarkets, it says its tech can work for any retail environment. It also says it has the upper hand on critics who believe eye tracking already exists.

According to Shopper Intelligence's chief executive Roger Jackson: "Eye tracking [at present] is about a handful of shoppers in a single aisle assessed manually at huge costs, not thousands [of shoppers] across the entire store automatically analysed at low costs."

WISE SHELF

Transforming Retail shelves to IoT

WiseShelf

Based: Tel Aviv, Israel
Founded by: Shalom Nakdimon
Started trading: May 2016
Website: wiseshelf.com
Email: shalom@wiseshelf.com
Employees: 6

Innovations in tech have given retailers the opportunity to transform their organisations by serving customers differently and by developing new channels. However, many retailers just want to make their everyday operations more efficient.

WiseShelf positions itself in this space, giving grocers and FMCG companies a more centralised and real-time view of on-shelf stock availability – crucial data in current circumstances. It also gives retailers the chance to improve replenishment efficiency and planogram accuracy.

Using light sensors at the shelf edge, connected to its software, WiseShelf provides real-time alerts, actions and analysis of store inventory to retail head offices and suppliers.

Since its launch in 2016, WiseShelf has worked with retailers around the world including Albert Heijn, Dansk, Iceland and Super-Pharm.

The latter is viewed by the start-up as its flagship client, with WiseShelf's offering being rolled out across all Super-Pharm stores. Using the tech, the retailer has improved shelf availability for seven key categories and reduced time spent replenishing shelves.

For Iceland, WiseShelf's tech is helping identify, monitor and improve availability levels for soft drinks and packaged bread – two areas of focus for the UK grocer.

avasam

Avasam

Based: London, UK
Founded by: Tejas Dave
Started trading: October 2019
Website: avasam.com
Email: tejas@avasam.com
Employees: 40

As ecommerce has become a larger part of retail and customer expectations over speed of delivery have heightened, supply chains have grown in complexity and bureaucracy.

Avasam aims to solve some of these challenges with its software that connects online sellers and suppliers, specifically those involved in dropshipping goods.

The tech promises to automate much of the process and provide a centralised platform for retailers and suppliers using this method of fulfilment.

Avasam can be integrated into multiple third-party platforms, with more than 60 automated connections to marketplaces such as Amazon and ebay, shopping cart providers such as Magento and WooCommerce, and third-party shipping services.

Wholesale footwear retailer Beta Shoes implemented Avasam during the start-up's beta testing stage and has reported improved sales, fewer returns and faster delivery to consumers since switching from its previous dropshipping provider.

Discount retailer Shop Monk has enjoyed similar results. Since partnering with Avasam, Shop Monk has reported a 200% increase in growth with more than 100 sellers listing its products across platforms such as Amazon, ebay and Groupon.

Avasam started life focused on giving UK customers the opportunity to receive faster shipping times, but has now added European suppliers including B2B wholesaler BigBuy and expects to add more international partners as it grows.

RWRC DISCOVERY 50

DynamicAction

Based: Tunbridge Wells, UK
Founded by: John Squire and Michael Ross
Started trading: January 2016
Website: dynamicaction.com
Email: john.squire@dynamicaction.com
Employees: 55

Common business parlance goes that if you can't measure it, you can't manage it.

This has sparked a plethora of analytics companies entering the retail market to help locate and monitor data on customer behaviour and business performance.

DynamicAction is among those and is a prescriptive analytics solution provider that gives retailers an immediate and comprehensive summary of their data.

In the four years since it started trading, retailers across the globe including Cole Haan, Columbia Sportswear, Wehkamp, Otto Group and Farfetch have worked with DynamicAction, but its major case study is Otto-owned German fashion retailer Heine.

DynamicAction's tech has given Heine a single view of its data, putting all relevant product and customer business intelligence in one place from which key commercial decisions can be made.

For example, Heine uses the software to identify in-demand products selling in stores that are not available online to understand its most profitable SKUs and to reduce the number of markdowns.

Heine head of sales Alexander Vogues says: "We are now taking cross-functional connected actions on product and customer, which are driving better profit performance. We have only scratched the surface of what is possible with DynamicAction. There are many more use cases to explore."

Zoovu

Based: London, UK
Started trading: August 2019
Website: zoovu.com
Employees: 185

The expert human touch offered by in-store retail staff is often lacking online, but retailers are deploying new technology to bridge that gap.

One way of doing this is through the use of digital assistants, which help online shoppers find the products they otherwise may have given up searching for.

Zoovu plays in this space, offering retailers an AI-driven online chat platform that aims to drive conversions and improve the online product search process. The start-up's digital assistant technology can also capture consumer behaviour data, enabling retailers to learn more about their audience.

Zoovu already works with brands and retailers including Amazon, Coty, Whirlpool, Canon and Trek.

Amazon partnered with Zoovu to convert huge amounts of SKUs into easily understandable language in seconds. The ultimate aim being to help its shoppers understand and find the products so it could drive more purchases. Amazon is now using Zoovu across 85 product categories and has live digital assistants in more than 20 countries.

For bike retailer Trek, Zoovu helped build an interactive bike finder that would guide consumers through a series of carefully chosen questions before matching them with the ideal product from myriad options. The brand found that overall site engagement increased and those using the tool were twice as likely to convert.

Peak

Based: London, UK
Founded by: Richard Potter
Started trading: November 2014
Website: peak.ai
Email: info@peak.ai
Employees: 103

Drowning in data, lacking in insight – this is a phrase often used to describe multichannel retailers.

Peak's AI-fuelled platform has a solution and wants to help retailers get more from their data so they can use it effectively within their marketing and reduce the need to invest in their own data scientist teams.

Its AI technology can be used by retailers across three core solutions: to streamline supply chains, optimise consumer demand and support customer acquisition via marketing tools.

Peak has been working closely with footwear retailer Footasylum. It created an AI-powered algorithm that draws insights based on the past transactional and behavioural data of each customer, enabling the retailer to communicate with its customers at an appropriate time and with a suitable message – be it on social media or via email.

The partnership has helped the retailer push relevant product recommendations and entice those who are less engaged to buy with special offers. Footasylum has recorded a 28% rise in email revenue using the AI-driven software and a 75% reduction in cost per social click.

Evidence of its success, Footasylum is looking at new ways to use the technology and expand the partnership.

SignStix

Based: Leeds, UK
General manager: Iain Kilner
Started trading: June 2013
Website: signstix.com
Email: info@signstix.com
Employees: 10

Digital screens are now par for the course in retailers' flagship stores and are also increasingly being deployed in experimental pop-up spaces.

By focusing on 'retailtainment' and immersive experiences, retailers can provide customers with fun, unique experiences that elevate shopping to new heights.

The most forward-thinking retailers understand digital signage can do more than just showcase adverts and repetitive brand content – there's an opportunity to add to the customer experience and drive sales.

SignStix specialises in interactive digital signage solutions, where on-screen content can change depending on products being perused in a store.

SignStix worked with The Shopper Agency in 2018 to help UK flooring retailer Karndean Designflooring build experimental retail space Karndean Inspire Studios.

Designed and developed using the SignStix platform, Karndean has built an interactive Place 'n' Learn table, which enables shoppers to place a flooring sample – fitted with an RFID tag – on to it to access digital content specific to their product selection.

The aim of the in-store technology, which uses SignStix's web-based content creation and animation tools, is to help consumers visualise how different flooring might look in their homes.

The concept has been installed in Karndean's own showroom and eight retail stockists, with more planned.

Karndean retail sales director Scott Cochrane says: "Staying ahead of the competition is vital for us and with Karndean Inspire Studios we are doing just that."

Quorso

Based: London, UK
Founded by: Julian Mills and Dan Slowe
Started trading: January 2016
Website: quorso.com
Email: julian.millls@quorso.com
Employees: 22

Retail is detail. Sometimes it's the small things that add up to make a big difference to a retailer's performance.

Quorso is a performance-improvement platform that, once in the hands of retail operations teams, allows users to gain insights and take action on information, as well as measure the results of specific decisions.

Through its link-up with point-of-sale data, the software enables store managers to measure how their display and design-related decisions impact sales and can identify suggestions for improvement.

Quorso has been working with retailers in the US and UK including Marks & Spencer, providing technology to drive the weekly store performance process.

The platform ingests point-of-sale data from all M&S stores for all product lines, surfaces the highest priority opportunities for each store and then coaches store managers to implement the required fixes, (for example, improving on-shelf availability, visual merchandising and shrinkage).

Quorso measures the impact and scales success by building a company playbook. Feedback on the technology speaks for itself, with an M&S store manager in Cambridge saying: "Quorso helps me quickly focus on priorities in a simple way, drives and tracks actions more easily and reduces management time. It's a really exceptional tool."

Hyper Group

Based: Leeds, UK
Founded by: Peter Denby, Adam Barrowcliff, Damon Bryan and Thomas Hill
Started trading: April 2019
Website: hyper-group.co.uk
Email: peter@hyper-group.co.uk
Employees: 5

The concept of 'one-to-one' marketing supported by relevant personalised messaging to shoppers has received growing interest from retailers as they look to improve conversions and build long-lasting customer relationships.

Leeds-based start-up Hyper Group says its technology enables retailers to analyse their customers' behaviour and then deliver them personalised experiences across websites, apps, in-store digital displays or through staff-assisted clienteling devices.

Its hyper-personalisation covers a range of strategic areas, from assortment recommendations to tips on how to optimise pricing based on demand.

Hyper Group says it is focused on the data science behind personalisation, with its technology able to help retailers achieve up to a 17% increase in customer loyalty, double revenue growth and boost brand advocacy by 60%.

While it is not yet on the record with its case studies, the start-up has shared several examples where its technology has helped retailers. Clients include a big four grocer in the UK, a European holiday operator and a value-led home-shopping business.

For the grocer, Hyper Group is delivering a platform that combines several data sources, and will help the retailer and its suppliers to target consumers with relevant messaging via in-store digital screens.

duologi

Duologi

Based: Manchester, UK

Started trading: March 2017

Website: duologi.com

Email: sales@duologi.com

Employees: 54

Giving consumers the option of buy now, pay later has been one of the biggest recent trends in the industry as retailers seek to reduce missed conversions at the point of purchase by providing customers with additional payment options.

Duologi is one of the players in this market, offering a point-of-sale technology-based platform that integrates with retailers' existing systems and gives businesses the chance to provide multiple alternative finance choices to their customers.

The start-up's system offers finance options on baskets from £150 up to £15,000. Options include interest-bearing or interest-free finance, as well as buy now, pay later.

Duologi's system can produce instant reports on sales, revenue and approvals, which retailers can use as part of their wider business intelligence analysis and stock-ordering decision-making.

Home and garden discount retailer JTF has implemented the Duologi platform, offering alternative finance as a means of payment for goods priced £500 or above.

An initial one-store trial became a full-scale partnership after the retailer noticed its positive impact on sales and introduced the system in 12 of its stores across the UK.

Love the Sales

LovetheSales.com

Based: London, UK

Founded by: Stuart McClure, Mark Solomon and David Bishop

Started trading: July 2015

Website: lovethesales.com

Email: hello@lovethesales.com

Employees: 13

Year-on-year price comparisons show UK retailers are discounting stock at unprecedented levels since the Covid-19 crisis hit to mitigate the drop in high street custom.

Increases in reductions across the board highlight how preserving cash flow is becoming a primary issue.

As an aggregator for discounted products, LovetheSales.com can help retailers sell their stock at a faster rate and at better margins than if they tried to do it alone.

It has developed its own AI-fuelled system, matching its audience of millions to branded goods from third-party partners.

The LovetheSales.com search engine links products to consumers whose search activity covers the same attributes. The platform has recently launched its own checkout to effectively become an online discount marketplace in its own right.

To date, the start-up has worked with more than 1,000 retailers and brands, including Harrods, Kurt Geiger and Ralph Lauren, providing them with an alternative to holding unsold goods in warehouses, selling to deep discounters or destroying products altogether.

In the past year it has helped Reiss sell more than £180,000 of excess stock and Argos sell £210,000. It also worked with Asos and Very.co.uk to help the online retailers sell more than £500,000 of excess stock including VAT, meaning a faster recovery of losses from excess inventory for those brands.

zigzag GLOBAL

ZigZag Global

Based: London, UK

Founded by: Al Gerrie

Started trading: July 2015

Website: zigzag.global

Email: hello@zigzag.global

Employees: 60

Returns have become a major part of 21st-century commerce, with consumers expecting to be able to easily send back unwanted goods for an instant refund.

However, returns rates at some UK retailers can be up to 30% of goods sold, according to technology company Rebound.

Returns in the age of coronavirus has only become trickier. Consumer spend has sharply moved online – and with a higher number of ecommerce purchases comes a higher number of ecommerce returns too.

ZigZag Global helps retailers manage returns by getting stock back into the supply chain faster and more efficiently. Its platform connects retailers to warehouses, carriers, and marketplaces around the world, and uses predictive analytics to assess the most cost-effective and energy-efficient routes for returned products.

The system enables goods to either go back to the retailer via consolidation or be moved to the best local markets for it to be resold, donated to charity or recycled.

Retail clients include fashion brands and department store chains. In 2019, a luxury department store group used the start-up's technology to set up a portal allowing it to understand when and why a return is coming back before it has even been posted. The portal is retailer-branded and gives consumers a digital method of returning items and a place to find answers to queries.

RevLifter

RevLifter
Based: London, UK
Founded by: Simon Bird and Ryan Kliszat
Started trading: June 2017
Website: revlifter.com
Email: simon.bird@revlifter.com
Employees: 23

Three key metrics for any retailer's digital department are to increase rates of new customer acquisition, drive higher average order value and increase conversion rates.

Software built by RevLifter addresses these areas by creating personalised deals that appear on retailers' websites at an optimum time in the consumer's purchase journey, or even off-site after a customer has left their cart.

The platform uses AI to understand real-time signals from users' on-site behaviour. Each retailer uses it in their own specific way, taking advantage of RevLifter's deals page, analytics or e-gift card tools.

Customers include Marks & Spencer, Harvey Nichols, HP and The Hut Group.

Since partnering with RevLifter in 2018, the technology has helped HP drive its US sales of higher-margin products such as laptops and ensured messages pop up at appropriate times to highlight the benefits of buying more premium ink ranges.

The software has also enabled HP to treat gamers and business customers differently, ensuring incentives are displayed to the relevant audience. Overall, HP has reported higher average order value and above-average conversion rates.

HP USA affiliate marketing manager Austin Ratner says: "RevLifter is the first partner to allow for true personalisation in the coupon space. This allows advertisers to be much more intelligent when it comes to targeting a customer's demands low in the purchasing funnel."

Increasingly

Based: London, UK
Founded by: Sri Sharma and Satish Jayakumar
Started trading: December 2016
Website: increasingly.com
Email: sri@increasingly.com
Employees: 35

Upselling, cross-selling and bundles are core techniques retailers commonly use to boost sales.

Using innovative technology, Increasingly supports retailers with the latter.

The London-based start-up has developed AI-fuelled software to help retailers drive greater basket revenue of up to 15%, by automatically bundling collections online.

Inspired by Amazon's bundling, the start-up has built on that idea to create technology that aids business' cross-selling and upselling strategies in the process.

Increasingly's clients include HP, Pentland Brands – the parent company of Berghaus, Boxfresh, Kickers and Lacoste footwear – and Samsung.

Samsung ran six campaigns with Increasingly from June 2017, which it said drove 46% of all cross-promotion sales on the consumer electronics company's site and helped increase conversion rates by 20%. There was a focus on bundling in higher-margin accessories into the offers presented to consumers on the site to help boost revenue.

Samsung e-store merchandising manager Alex Jeffrey says customers "love" the tool: "Increasingly AI bundling and promotion features have been an absolute winner for us. When we have run promotional Sales, Increasingly has driven up to 46% of those sales. It's driven up basket value and attachment rate."

Neighbourly

Based: Bristol, UK
Founded by: Steve Butterworth and Zoe Colosimo
Started trading: July 2014
Website: neighbourly.com
Email: hello@neighbourly.com
Employees: 28

Purpose-led retail is becoming increasingly important for consumers and retailers, with companies being revamped or created with a social mission in mind.

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is now much more than a tick-box exercise. This is even more true in the current climate where retailers that put purpose before profit are more likely to thrive.

Neighbourly is a public CSR platform that allows businesses to invest in their communities by donating volunteer time, money and surplus products at scale.

Neighbourly was one of the UK's first B Corporations, meaning it is a for-profit company but certified by the non-profit B Lab to meet rigorous standards of social and environmental performance, accountability and transparency.

Working alongside Innocent Drinks, Neighbourly launched a product surplus redistribution programme to connect the brand's Avonmouth depot with charities and community groups.

As part of the tie-up, these local organisations can pick up surplus Innocent smoothies, drinks and juices, and use them to support people in need.

Prior to this arrangement, Innocent redistributed stock offline, with up to nine days between a charity receiving the goods, thus reducing shelf-life on receipt.

Neighbourly allows for stock allocation to the charities within one to four days, and allows users to track and report on donations via one central platform.

Smarter Click Technology

Based: London, UK
Started trading: November 2013
Website: smarterclick.co.uk
Employees: 27

All retailers want to turn website browsers into buyers. Smarter Click Technology specialises in optimising conversion rates. It has a range of tools in its portfolio to help retailers achieve this goal, notably through creating branded prompts and messages along the online shopping journey.

It also launched an analytics tool to monitor use of voucher codes on retailers' websites.

Working with retailers and brands including Carphone Warehouse, Merlin Entertainments, Red Letter Days and Atterley, Smarter Click has helped consumer-facing businesses of various types implement online conversion triggers.

Smarter Click created overlays for the Red Letter Days website, co-branding its website ads with content partners, such as

the blogging community from where many traffic referrals were arriving.

The prompts to purchase would appear at the point a consumer was about to leave the website, offering exclusive discounts.

Red Letter Days reported conversion rate hikes and better relationships with bloggers.

Online marketing manager Dan Williams credited the business, saying: "Smarter Click has proven itself to be able to improve our conversion rates from various channels with continual innovative and strategic ideas for our campaigns. We have seen constant return from their campaigns and its client services support is second to none."

Karakuri

Karakuri
Based: London, UK
Founded by: Barney Wragg
Started trading: February 2020
Website: karakuri.com
Email: info@karakuri.com
Employees: 20

One of the trends at the end of the last decade – and which has seemingly ramped up in the early part of the 2020s – is consumers' shift to alternative diets.

Karakuri is one company looking to take advantage of this change and is focused on what it describes as "hyper-personalised" nutrition. It provides technology that allows people to order food exactly the way they want it – be it out of general preference, for better nutrition or to meet dietary needs.

Its unique IP combines robotics, machine learning, optics and sensors to automate the assembly of ready-to-eat meals. It can help prepare meals in lower-order volume restaurants and in-store retail environments.

Grocery and technology company Ocado is invested in the business, having led a £7m investment round in 2019, and is exploring usage of the technology within its rapid delivery division Ocado Zoom.

Ocado will be taking delivery of the first of Karakuri's DK-One machines this year.

Ocado chief executive Tim Steiner says: "Our investment in Karakuri, potentially a game-changer in the preparation of food to go, gives us the opportunity to bring the best innovation to the benefit of our own customers as well as our partners."

The start-up's Ocado relationship remains non-exclusive and it continues to work with other restaurants and retailers.

VoCoVo

VoCoVo
Based: Oxfordshire, UK
Started trading: March 2016
Website: vocovo.com
Email: sales@vocovo.com
Employees: 42

Communication between retailers and their staff has never been more pressing and there's a big chasm between those businesses that are communicating effectively and those that aren't.

Oxfordshire-based telecommunications start-up VoCoVo can help retailers improve their in-store communication – particularly relevant to food retailers right now.

It provides connected headsets that link up a retailer's staff, customers, software and hardware.

Using the technology allows retailers to, for example, avoid generic loudspeaker announcements and keep in-store communication more specific between team members.

It is used behind the scenes by retailers but can also facilitate direct customer communications. Tesco, the Co-op, Wickes, Dunelm and Halfords are among the retailers using the technology.

At Tesco, VoCoVo headsets power communications across operations teams in around 600 Metro stores, while trials are under way with a view to expanding into Tesco Extra.

In addition to reducing loudspeaker announcements, the technology has allowed Tesco to undertake more discreet security monitoring – and keep staff connected.

The Co-op uses the technology across its stores and has reported particular benefits in terms of communication within shops manned by just two staff at a time.

ElizaSixtyFour

Based: Stoke-on-Trent, UK
Founded by: Greg Philips
Started trading: August 2018
Website: elizasixtyfour.com
Email: josiah.halstead@deeset.co.uk
Employees: 8

Achieving productivity is crucial for retailers at this time and automation plays into this, helping to aid existing back-end operations and enabling new experiences and customer operations.

ElizaSixtyFour applies machine-learning methods to existing business processes, aiming to provide time and labour efficiencies to those using it – particularly around managing store inventory. Using its image-recognition software, retailers can uncover valuable data-driven insights.

The start-up automates the photo-checking process for its merchandising agency client Dee Set, an organisation that works with several retailers including major grocers in the UK.

As part of Dee Set's work, it must use photographic evidence to prove it has completed merchandising tasks at the shelf edge. ElizaSixtyFour's automated technology is used to validate a photo of a fixture against its specific planogram, supporting what is a necessary compliance process.

The tool, called Recognise, has been used by Dee Set for its gift and greetings cards merchandising work in Sainsbury's and Wilko stores.

For the latter, merchandisers who used the tool to check their fixtures live in Wilko stores were 11% quicker at merchandising their assigned fixtures and achieved an 9% increase in compliance.

Having started trading less than two years ago, ElizaSixtyFour has plans to work with more retailers this year.

Clearpay

Based: Australia/UK
Founded by: Nick Molnar and Anthony Eisen
Started trading: 2014 in Australia (Afterpay), June 2019 in UK (Clearpay)
Website: clearpay.co.uk
Email: smbpartners@clearpay.co.uk
Employees: 40

Millennials are a core demographic for retail and a big challenge facing many retailers is leveraging their spending power – from being present in the places they shop to making payments as easy as possible.

A 2019 YouGov study found that UK millennials have become "credit-averse" and are increasingly hungry for innovations that offer greater convenience and avoid debt.

To cater to their evolving payment demands, Clearpay enables millennials (and customers generally) to purchase items from fashion, beauty and lifestyle brands in four interest-free payments spread over six weeks while allowing the retailer to be paid upfront.

Launched as Afterpay in Australia in 2014 and rolled out in the UK as Clearpay in June 2019, the fintech start-up's UK retail partners include Asos, Anthropologie, Urban Outfitters, JD Sports, Boohoo and The Hut Group (THG).

In October 2019, Clearpay began working with THG to offer an alternative to traditional credit. At the time THG was also working with competitor pay-later business Klarna, but in February 2020 THG announced it would be replacing Klarna with Clearpay across its UK and US websites.

THG founder and chief executive Matthew Moulding says: "Our strengthened partnership with Clearpay reflects our commitment to collaborating with businesses that share our ambition to offer best-in-class customer experiences."

Gophr

Based: London, UK

Started trading: September 2014

Website: uk.gophr.com

Employees: 21

Online delivery has represented a major battlefield in UK retail with consumers getting used to convenience, transparency and speed of product fulfilment – partly due to Amazon and other online players raising their game.

With ecommerce spend and returns accelerating in the pandemic, retailers also need to find innovative ways to deal with these surges.

Gophr specialises in same-day delivery, supplementing retailers' existing logistics networks and providing a rapid fulfilment service for them to tap into in the London area. Customers can use its platform to book route-optimised couriers and then track their progress in real time.

Gophr already works with Net-a-Porter and HelloFresh and plans to expand beyond London and across the UK this year.

The start-up provides ad-hoc drivers for Net-a-Porter's dispatch team to help with same-day and urgent requirements within London and has successfully delivered more than 50,000 parcels for the luxury fashion etailer.

Meanwhile, Gophr has already completed nearly 500,000 deliveries on behalf of food box delivery business HelloFresh, replacing part of the service's in-house fleet after proving itself to be a valuable partner.

HelloFresh logistics manager Robert Kindrade says: "Gophr has improved our offering to our customers, has given us low error rates and has built custom solutions bespoke to our needs."

RWRC

DISCOVERY 50

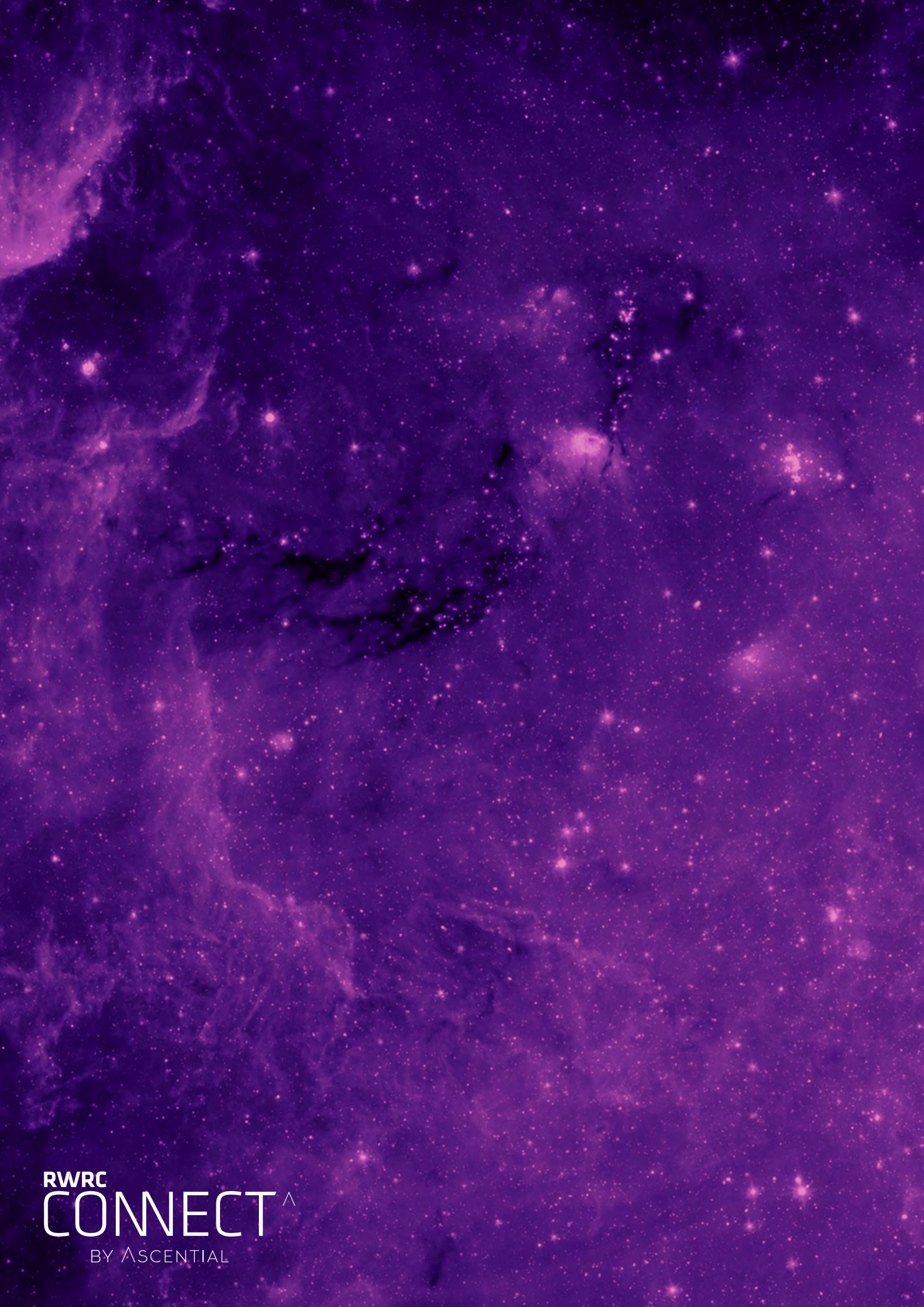# THE DISCOVERY 50 ARE RETAIL'S FUTURE – WHO WILL BE NEXT?

We know everyone in retail is challenged right now. At Retail Week, we want to continue to celebrate successes, help businesses foster innovation, collaborate and come together to think differently and explore new ways of working.

We've already seen from this *Discovery 50* report that the role start-ups play in supporting retail should not be underestimated and we can't wait to champion the new cohort of start-ups that will be stepping up to help retailers survive this unprecedented period.

Entries for 2021's *Discovery 50* report will open in September 2020 to recognise inspiring global retail tech start-ups launched on, or after, January 1, 2014.

Retailers can nominate tech start-ups they've worked with on a pilot or full-scale solution, while retail tech start-ups can self-nominate to be featured with an entry fee of just £500.

Discovery